

Minutes
King County Rural Forest Commission
May 15, 2001
Mercerview Community Center

Commissioners present: Steve Ketz, Ken Konigsmark, Doug McClelland

Commissioners absent: Jean Bouffard, Gordon Bradley, Rudy Edwards, Bill Kombol, Fred McCarty, Andrew Schwarz

Staff: Kathy Creahan, Bill Loeber, Kristi McClelland, Benj Wadsworth

Guests: Dave Warren

Doug McClelland called the meeting to order at 10:00 am.

Chair Report

Doug opened the meeting by reviewing the agenda and suggesting that because Nancy Hansen is sick, the Commission should address the WLRD reorganization and plan to submit comments to the County in the form of a letter.

Steve Ketz expressed his frustration with Commission members that do not attend meetings regularly. All agreed that the Commission should insist that members miss no more than two or three meeting a year.

Benj suggested that the Commission might also consider a proxy provision that would allow members to send an alternate to the meeting who would be considered a voting member.

Minutes Approval

- Due to lack of a quorum, approval of the minutes was postponed until the June meeting.

Staff Report

Benj reported on the status of pending appointments. Dave Warren, Matt Mattson and Louis Kahn have all been appointed by the Executive and are awaiting approval by Council.

Benj suggested that the Commission might want to cancel a meeting in the summer due to scheduling conflicts. Doug suggested that changing the June meeting to the week prior would

enable him to attend. All agreed that Wed, June 13 would work. Benj will check with the rest of the Commission.

Benj reminded the Commission that they had discussed planning a field trip in the summer. All agreed it was a good idea.

Forest Policy discussion

Doug gave the group time to read the revised policy. The policy will be a stand-alone document that may or may not be adopted by Council. It should consist of a comprehensive set of strong statements that provide direction on forestry issues.

Discussion followed about the seven “guiding principles” that follow the main mission statement.

Water and Land Resources Division reorganization

There are a number of levels of reorganization occurring at the County. Most importantly, the Parks department is being merged with DNR. The County is gradually divesting itself of the active recreation parks. Until this is complete, there will likely be a parks division within DNR that will manage the active recreation facilities. The passive recreation / forested parks will probably come under the management of the Resource Lands section, though the Parks maintenance staff will still be available to help with maintenance on those lands. The GIS services are also being consolidated within DNR.

Kathy Creahan gave a summary of how WLRD is being reorganized. The Open Space section will be moved from the Resource Lands section into Capital Projects. The forestry program will be part of a Stewardship Services group.

The group decided to come up with a list of recommendations to send to Nancy. Ken suggested emphasizing the need not to lose the focus on acquiring forestland. Dave Warren commented that the small landowner assistance / education program should be preserved. Kathy added that the County should try to fund the WSU Coop Extension Natural Resource programs.

Ken suggested that the County should explore partnerships with WADNR to manage large blocks of forestland. Doug responded that WADNR is trying to consolidate its land in large holdings and will not likely be interested in managing small fragments.

Doug suggested that the County should not reinvent the wheel in managing County lands. Rather, they should adapt existing models from large private landowners, WADNR, etc.

Ken suggested that the County should not try to be all things to all people. They need to establish clear goals for how they want to manage forestland. Dave Warren commented that County lands are public and should be managed for multiple use.

Doug stated the need for a dedicated revenue stream to manage forestland. He feels there should be a trust mandate that dictates how County forestland will be managed.

Ken mentioned the need to make some decisions on the recently acquired forestland such as Polygon, Sugarloaf, Mitchell Hill and Ring Hill.

Ken suggested the need to expand the biosolids program in order to acquire additional land and to tie the program to Brightwater, the new sewage treatment plant. Doug suggested the need to facilitate communication between the WLRD staff and the Wastewater Treatment staff.

Kathy emphasized the need to maintain the tie between the forestry program and the Surface Water Management fee.

Dave Warren commented that there is movement at the federal level to develop a carbon sequestration program. Kathy agreed that there is a need to emphasize the importance of forests in sequestering carbon.

Ken stated the need for the County to maintain focus on the development of the regional trail.

Kathy suggested that the Commission should suggest that it can be very helpful in making recommendations as the County moves forward in addressing these issues.

Steve expressed the need for clarity from leadership in making decisions about how County land will be managed.

Kathy commented that part of the reorganization has put the forestry and agriculture programs into a group called Stewardship Services. She is concerned that this placement will misrepresent all that the forestry program really does and suggested that the Commission might want to comment on it.

Benj will write a letter summarizing this discussion. Doug suggested that the letter should be sent to the Executive, Larry Phillips and others as well as Nancy. Kathy suggested that it would

still be a good idea for Nancy to come to the next meeting and for Ken and Doug to reschedule a meeting with her.

Conflict of Interest

Doug raised the issue of conflict of interest and suggested that it would be beneficial for the Commission to move on from the controversy. He understands that there are real concerns about what happened at the November meeting but he does not feel that it is a good idea to refer the matter to the Ombudsman's office. He suggested that at the next meeting, the group should spend ten minutes allowing everybody to express their concerns, adopt the amendment to the administrative procedures, and move on. All agreed that was a good idea.

Other items

Ken suggested that the Commission should have addressed the issue of large institutional uses in the Rural Area. He feels that the issue should be on the next agenda, as Council is still dealing with it. Benj commented that he thinks the group is better off commenting individually on this issue because it is so controversial. All agreed to have an update at the next meeting but avoid lengthy controversy. Ken will write a letter if he feels it is necessary and be prepared to run it by the Commission.

Other suggested agenda items include discussions about certification and carbon sequestration. Benj will look for speakers on certification. Dave Warren mentioned that Christina Vogt, the Dean of the College of Forest Resources at UW, recently gave a talk to the Washington Farm Forestry Association about certification. She is not overly supportive of certification for a variety of reasons.

Dave Warren mentioned that there had been a recent meeting on Vashon Island and that there was still a bit of an anti-forestry attitude among certain people on the island. He feels that there is a need for additional education.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:10.

Next meeting - Wednesday, June 13, 10:00 at Mercerview Community Center.